

## 9. Election of Officers and Members

The Chairman reported that the terms of several members of the Executive Committee were ending. Nominations for Chairman, Vice-Chairman,

Conference Co-ordinator and General Secretary had been published in Bulletin 86. The nomination of Bob Loos to continue as Treasurer for a further term had been omitted in error from this list. No further nominations had been received. The following Officers were then elected unanimously:

*Chairman*           **Gerard Boere**  
*Vice-Chairman & General Secretary*  
**Nick Davidson**  
*Conference Co-ordinator*  
**Petra de Goeij**  
*Treasurer*         **Bob Loos**

Two ordinary Committee members had been proposed for re-election, and no further nominations had been received.

The following were unanimously re-elected as Executive Committee members:

**Elena Lebedeva**  
**Pavel Tomkovich**

Subsequent to the publication of the Agenda in Bulletin 86, Mark Barter had resigned as Executive Committee member representing the link with the Australasian Wader Study Group (AWSG). As a replacement, his successor as Chairman of AWSG, Jim Wilson, had been proposed and seconded for election, in line with the terms of the Constitution.

Jim Wilson was unanimously elected as an ordinary member of the Executive Committee.

The Chairman thank Alexander Yurlov and Jan van Gils who had completed their terms on the Executive Committee.

## 10. Subscription rates for 1999

The Executive Committee proposed that there would be no changes to the basic subscription rates for 1999, and noted that it was likely that no changes would need to be made to the equivalent subscription rates in other currencies. An unchanged subscription rate for 1999 was approved.

## 11. Registration as a Dutch Society

The English-language Constitution had been approved by the membership. To finalise the legal requirements it was now necessary to translate this Constitution in Dutch. This was underway and it was anticipated that formal registration would take place by the end of 1998. With a legal status in place the group would be in a better position to receive grants and funding from outside bodies.

## 12. Future Conferences

**1999.** The Group had accepted an offer from France. The conference would be held on 24-26 September 1999, on a small island near Vannes on the south coast of Brittany, in an area important for Brent Geese, ducks and waders. The dates had been fixed to fit in between numerous other conferences taking place in autumn 1999.

**2000.** An invitation from the British Trust for Ornithology to host the conference in eastern England had been accepted. This would be an excellent opportunity to revisit the Group's roots at the turn of the millenium.

**2001.** A provisional invitation had been accepted to hold the meeting in the Netherlands. This was planned as a large and high profile conference focussing on new advances in global flyway research.

**2002.** A possibility of revisiting Odessa, at the kind invitation of Anatoly Korzyukov, 10 years on from the 1992 conference was described.

It was also noted that a possible extra WSG meeting in spring 2000 on the US East Coast (possibly Delaware Bay) was under discussion.

## 13. Any Other Business

Audit Committee. It was reported that Peter Evans had indicated his willingness to continue as a member of the Audit Committee for a further three years, but that Les Underhill wished to step down. Les Underhill was thanked for all service on the committee.

Humphrey Sitters had offered to take on the role for the next three years. Peter Evans and Humphrey Sitters were unanimously appointed to serve as the Audit Committee for the next three years.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting.

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## 1999 WADER STUDY GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, VANNES, FRANCE

All WSG members are warmly invited to the 1999 Annual General Meeting which will be held near Vannes, France between Friday 24 and Monday 27 September. The conference will take place in a holiday centre that was previously a covent, built on Île Berder. This small island is situated in the middle of the Golfe du Morbihan, on the south coast of Brittany. The Golfe du Morbihan is one of the most important areas in France for wintering and migrating waders and wildfowl.

As usual, the conference will start on Saturday morning and end on Sunday evening. The Sunday afternoon

excursion will allow us to visit the Golfe du Morbihan by boat. On Monday 27, there will be a workshop on

population dynamics of Avocets (see below).

The easiest ways to reach Vannes are as follows:

### *By train and plane*

From Paris, Vannes is a 3 hr 30 min train journey. Take the TGV from Paris Montparnasse to Vannes. A bus and boat transfer will be arranged from Vannes railway station to Île Berder.



**By car**

From northern and eastern Europe, follow the motorway to Paris, then on to Rennes and Vannes.

Coming from U.K., you can either sail directly to Île Berder or, if you prefer, land at Saint Malo and travel to Rennes and Vannes by car or train.

For more detailed information on any aspect of the conference, please write or phone Guillaume Gélinaud at the following address: SEPNB - Réserve Naturelle des Marais de Séné, Brouel-Kerbihan, 56860 Séné, France; Tel: (0033) 297 66 92 76; Fax: (0033) 297 66 02 93; E-mail: sepnb.sene@wanadoo.fr

**WSG CONFERENCE  
WORKSHOP 1999**

**Understanding population dynamics of Avocets**

*Avocet Recurvirostra avosetta* breeding populations in several west European countries have increased considerably during the past decades. Both the speed and the timing of the population development, however, have differed between regions. Studies of population dynamics of Avocets have so far taken place mainly at a regional level, so the relationship between the dynamics in different parts of the species' range cannot be fully explained. Very obviously, a better understanding of Avocet population dynamics can only be achieved by improving international co-operation. This is the aim of the workshop. More specifically it is intended :

- to compile actual breeding population sizes ;
- to bring together available information on the population development in different regions ;
- to discuss possible reasons for the observed patterns, with the aim of identifying gaps in knowledge ;
- to agree on a joint programme and common methods in order to improve the understanding of large scale population dynamics of Avocets.

The workshop will take place on Monday 27 September 1999 from 0900 to approximately 1600. Although the workshop will focus on population dynamics, short contributions on all other aspects of the species' biology will be welcome. Please send your offers of talks or posters to Guillaume Gélinaud.

**WADER STUDY GROUP ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE 16-19 OCTOBER  
1998, KESZTHELY, HUNGARY**

*A Personal Account*

I was standing on the balcony on the ninth floor of a nice hotel, staring at the silver lights of autumn reflecting on the largest freshwater lake in Central Europe. I slowly breathed in a huge dose of crystal-clear air as I moved my eyes to the gently rolling hills on the northern side of the lake thinking "Wow, isn't this place beautiful?". Last year, for the second time in just six years, the Annual Conference of the Wader Study Group was hosted by Hungary. Having spent some time away from my home country, I begin to understand why people love to go back: nice landscape, good weather, warm hospitality, great food and fine wine. Each of these components were present at the venue of the conference: Lake Balaton starting off a few metres from our hotel, nice autumn lights on the lake and colours on the neighbouring hillsides, courteous service by hotel and conference staff members, tasty cuisine and fiery yet delicate wines. But, what else is necessary for such an event to be a highly memorable one?

First, we, wader enthusiasts, learned a lot about, yes, about waders. There seems to be an insatiable desire in us to learn more about our favourite birds, and the WSG meetings, gathering both professional scientists and 'amateur' workers, appear to provide the perfect combination for this. Participants were presented with a uniquely productive mix of hard science and natural history observations, practical ornithology and theoretical background, with

conservation and management issues interwoven among the topics. No doubt the participants benefited entirely from the conference; not only did they learn about interesting new observations, population trends and so on, but also gained insight in the core methodology of their science, for example, estimation of population sizes, use of colour ringing, etc.

Second, probably as important as gaining knowledge, was that the Conference also provided a good opportunity to meet friends and get to know people from all across Europe. The fabulous wines served at the wine-tasting "social event", by no surprise, made the interactions even more lively and direct. Not even driving rain - on the very afternoon of the excursion - could diminish the high spirits or break thoughtful discussions.

Third, good organisation. The Hungarian Wetland Foundation and the Waterbird Protection Group of the Hungarian Ornithological Society, coordinated by György Szimuly in cooperation with Petra de Goeij of the Wader Study Group took good care of technical, scientific and social organisation and also helped delegates from Eastern Europe to attend the meeting. The organisers managed to "camouflage" themselves well at the conference venue - a sign that there were no problems arising on the part of the conference attendees; a sign of no need to search for and ask organisers for help.

Fourth, an effective official agenda. A major purpose of the WSG meetings is to initiate and oversee large-scale international projects on conservation and management of waders. Last year's conference will be memorable for setting up a working group for the Slender-billed Curlew Action Plan and for making an attempt to suggest ways to estimate population sizes of breeding and migrant waders.

Of course, everybody has his/her own impressions of the conference and to list

